

California (Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, in December of 2014, as leverage against the President's immigration executive order, the Republican leadership irresponsibly decided to hold hostage the 2015 funding for the Department of Homeland Security.

We are now 147 days in fiscal year 2015, just 4 days away from February 28, when the continuing resolution currently funding the Department will expire. The serious consequence of inaction by the Republican leadership is that it will leave the Department without the funds needed to effectively fulfill its mission of protecting our homeland.

It is unbelievable that given the urgency of our national security, House Republicans continue failing to put forward a realistic plan to fund the Department of Homeland Security.

Mistakenly, some Republicans believe the Department is doing just fine under the continuing resolution. Some even say it is okay to let DHS funding expire. Other Republicans suggest the preliminary Texas district court injunction, which blocks implementation of the President's executive action on immigration, is reason enough to continue holding hostage the funding for Homeland Security.

These are dangerously wrong conclusions. Secretary Johnson and agency heads have warned that if the CR is allowed to expire, national security operations will be disrupted, and essential personnel will be required to work without pay. They also warn passing another CR will not address the uncertainty of being able to meet our long-term national security needs.

Our national security cannot wait for the unrelated issue of the President's executive actions on immigration to work its way through the judicial process which, at best, is likely to take several months.

By contrast, Democrats have a responsible solution. Two weeks ago, Appropriations Committee Ranking Member NITA LOWEY and I introduced H.R. 861. It is a clean appropriations bill that funds the Department of Homeland Security for the remainder of fiscal year 2015. It is not a Democratic bill. If it were, it would more closely reflect Democratic priorities.

Rather, H.R. 861 contains the precise language of the November 2014 bipartisan bill negotiated in good faith by chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittees.

This is the bill that was intended to be part of the 2015 omnibus legislation that funded the rest of the Federal Government. It is the bill that will enable the Department of Homeland Security to address our Nation's current and most pressing security needs.

I am pleased that H.R. 861 is sponsored by every Democrat in the House, and we urge our Republican colleagues to join us.

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This bipartisan, bicameral bill will pass the House, pass the Senate, and be signed into law by the President. All it needs is for the Republican leadership to bring the bill to the floor for a vote.

Surely our Nation need not experience attacks like those in Paris and Copenhagen before we show our resolve to fund our Department of Homeland Security. Let us not wait around and hope Senate Republicans do the responsible thing.

House Republicans should lead by bringing H.R. 861 for a vote and making it clear to the American people that our Nation's security takes priority over political and unrelated policy debates. Failure to do so and letting funding for Homeland Security expire or taking the easy way out by kicking a viable solution down the road with a continuing resolution represents a failure in fulfilling our most basic responsibility as Members of Congress: to protect the American people and our country from harm.

Let's pass H.R. 861 today.

WILKES EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize a pioneering school in Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

Established in 2009, Wilkes Early College High School is a partnership between Wilkes County Schools and Wilkes Community College. The school provides a small learning community of students the opportunity to earn both a high school diploma and an associate degree. It is a 5-year school which enrolls approximately 60 ninth graders each year and is located on the campus of Wilkes Community College where students are enrolled in both honors-level high school classes and college courses.

The mission of Wilkes Early College High School is to provide a personalized program of study that will empower students to be lifelong, community-oriented learners who possess the technical and leadership skills needed for personal and professional success in a global community.

The \$40 annual fee, which covers textbooks and enrollment, is an extremely affordable way to help students reach their education goals, especially when you consider that the average tuition and fees was \$2,305 for a public 2-year institution in North Carolina this year and \$6,677 for a public 4-year institution. And those costs have increased 30 percent over the last 5 years.

Many of the students who attend Wilkes Early College High School are the first in their family to attend college. As a result, Principal Dion Stocks and his staff are working hard to out-

line expectations and guide students through the process of applying to a 4-year institution. Seminar classes are provided to assist students with understanding college expectations, the application process, and financial aid.

Last year, 21 students earned their associate degree in the school's first official graduating class, and 20 students are expected to earn their degree this year.

Wilkes Early College High School provides an advanced educational experience that equips students for success in college, career, and life. America needs more of this type of innovative learning.

FUNDING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. TAKAI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TAKAI. Mr. Speaker, today marks 4 days until the Department of Homeland Security runs out of money. We all had the opportunity for the first time this session to go back home last week for our district workweek, and I had an opportunity to speak about this particular issue at the Honolulu International Airport, where many of our DHS officials and employees are very concerned about this lapse of funding. Although some DHS employees would continue to work in the event of a shutdown, they would be forced to do so without pay, creating a significant distraction and dealing a significant blow to morale.

Every single House Democrat has co-sponsored clean legislation to fund DHS, and it is clear that there are a sufficient amount of votes to pass this bill now.

Keeping America's families safe is the first responsibility and priority of this Congress. We need to put aside the political gridlock that has plagued this House for too long and fund DHS now. An impasse in funding would close down the bulk of DHS' management and support of Homeland Security infrastructure that was built following the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Essential funding for the Department of Homeland Security is no place for grandstanding against immigration reform that strengthens our economy and our country. Let's remember: it was the inability of this House to act on the Senate's comprehensive immigration reform bill that forced the President to take executive action on immigration in the first place.

I came to Congress telling my constituents that I do not support government shutdowns, Federal furloughs, or sequestration, and now some in this body think they can fix this with further inaction, with further furloughs and further government shutdowns. I think not.

Let's pass a clean bill.